

Effective: March 2, 1993

Town of Concord

APP #46
Rabies Control Plan

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REFERENCES

SECTION 1: PURPOSE

The purpose of this APP is to prevent human cases of rabies, to prevent rabies in domestic animals and to provide town employees with guidelines for investigating complaints about rabid and potentially rabid animals.

SECTION 2: DEFINITIONS

- 2.1: "Animal Control Officer" means the person(s) appointed in accordance with M.G.L. Ch. 140, s. 151 to act as the Dog Officer for the Town of Concord. Under M.G.L. Ch. 140, s. 151A, the Dog Officer is authorized to seek out, catch and confine all dogs which are not licensed and vaccinated against rabies.
- 2.2: "Board of Health" means the legally constituted Board of Health for the Town of Concord, or its authorized agents or representatives.
- 2.3: "Garbage" means the animal, vegetable or other organic waste resulting from the handling, preparing, cooking, consumption or cultivation of food, and containers and cans which have contained food unless such containers and cans have been cleaned or prepared for recycling. Garbage shall not mean food waste which is free of meat, chicken or fish, or byproducts or bones therefrom, which is added to a residential compost pile maintained in a manner that does not constitute a health hazard.
- 2.4: "Inspector of Animals" means the person(s) appointed in accordance with M.G.L. Ch. 129, s. 15 to act as the local representative for the Department of Food and Agriculture, Division of Animal Health. Under M.G.L. Ch. 129, s. 21, the Inspector of Animals is authorized to examine and quarantine domestic animals that are possibly infected with rabies or exposed to known rabid animals.
- 2.5: "Isolation" means restricting the domestic animal from any human or animal contact during the longest usual incubation period of the disease in order to prevent effective contact and transmission of the disease to other domestic animals. Isolation will involve the confinement of the animal to a facility (i.e. a dog pound, veterinary hospital, commercial kennel) approved by the Inspector of Animals.
- 2.6: "Potentially rabid animal" means any pet, farm or wild animal that exhibits unusual behavior, and the dead body of any high-risk species (i.e. raccoon, bat, skunk or fox).
- 2.7: "Quarantine" means maintaining a domestic animal, regardless of vaccination status, in an escape-proof building or enclosure approved by the Inspector of Animals for ten days after exposure.
- 2.8: "Rabies" means the disease which is caused by the rabies virus, and characterized by progressive deterioration of the central nervous system and resulting in bizarre behavior and other neurologic signs.
- 2.9: "Rabies virus" means the virus belonging to the family Rhabdoviridae, in the genus Lyssavirus, usually transmitted directly by the bite or deep scratch from an infected animal.

- 2.10: "Viscera" means the internal organs of the thorax and abdomen, such as the heart, lungs, liver, kidneys and intestines.

SECTION 3: GENERAL INFORMATION

- 3.1: Description of Disease - Rabies is a viral disease which attacks the central nervous system (brain and spinal cord). After the virus enters the body through a break in the skin, it multiplies in the infected individual and follows the nerve pathways to the brain. If left untreated, the disease is always fatal.^[1]
- 3.2: Health and Safety Concerns - People infected with the rabies virus will die if they do not receive the proper medical treatment. People can get infected with rabies:
- (a) If they are bitten or scratched by a rabid animal, and the bite or scratch breaks the skin.
 - (b) If they get saliva, blood or other body fluid from a rabid animal or its carcass onto an open cut or mucous membrane (i.e., in the mouth, nose or eyes).
- 3.3: Treatment for Rabies - Rabies vaccinations are no longer given in the abdominal muscles. If exposed, people who have never had rabies vaccinations receive six injections in the arm, one at a time over the course of a month. The first injection is anti-rabidic serum to fight the virus, and the rest are vaccine injections to ensure long-lasting protection. To work best, the vaccinations should begin as soon after the bite as possible.^[2] However, if the animal has been caught and can be tested for rabies, some doctors wait until after the test results to see if the vaccinations are needed.
- 3.4: Carriers of Rabies - The rabies virus can infect any mammal, but is more common among certain high-risk species such as bats, skunks, foxes and raccoons. Rabies is uncommon among rodents like squirrels, rats, mice and chipmunks. Thanks to vaccines, rabies is rare among pets and farm animals.^[3]
- 3.5: Symptoms of Infection - It is possible for a "normal-acting" animal to be infected with the rabies virus and pass it on through bites or scratches. Behavioral changes do not occur until the virus attacks the animal's central nervous system. "Healthy" dogs that bite people are observed under quarantine for 10 days - it takes 3 to 5 days for an infected dog to die from the time when "furious" signs develop.^[4]

An animal can exhibit either the "dumb" or "furious" form of rabies once the virus attacks brain cells. In the "dumb" form, the animal will be oblivious to what goes on around it, may be very passive and may have paralysis of the lower jaw. In the "furious" form the animal may be very aggressive, hyperactive, easily frightened, and may attack people and animals for no apparent reason. Symptoms of the disease in animals may include: appearing to be sick or in poor condition, having difficulty walking and maintaining balance, snapping at nothing, acting out of character. However, animals that are infected with diseases other than rabies may exhibit similar symptoms. Therefore, the average person cannot determine whether an animal is infected with the rabies virus by observing the animal's behavior.

- 3.6: History in Massachusetts - Until recently, rabies was fairly rare in this state. The State Rabies Laboratory has found less than a dozen rabid animals per year, and they were almost always bats. There has not been a rabid dog in Concord for over fifty years.[⁵]

Over the past few months, rabid animals have been found in the Massachusetts communities of Ashburnham, Ashby, Bolton, Fitchburg, Lunenburg, Pepperell, Shirley and Townsend. Between September 16 and November 27 of this year, 21 raccoons, one skunk and one cat from these communities have tested positive for the rabies virus.[⁶] Shortly after the first of these animals tested positive, cities and towns were advised to develop local policies to control the spread of rabies in accordance with guidelines established by the Department of Public Health (Division of Epidemiology), the Department of Food and Agriculture (Bureau of Animal Health) and the Department of Fisheries, Wildlife & Environmental Law Enforcement (Division of Fisheries and Wildlife).

SECTION 4: GUIDELINES FOR RESIDENTS

- 4.1: To Prevent the Spread of Rabies - The best way to reduce the risk of rabies is to protect pets and to decrease contact with wild animals by following a few simple guidelines:

- (a) **DO NOT TOUCH OR PICK UP WILD OR STRAY ANIMALS OF ANY KIND.**
Avoid wild animals, especially bats, skunks, foxes and raccoons. Do not attempt to relocate problem wildlife; capturing wild animals and releasing them in another area is illegal and will not solve the problem.[⁷]
- (b) **AVOID SICK ANIMALS OR ANIMALS THAT ARE EXHIBITING ANY UNUSUAL BEHAVIOR.** Rabid animals may act either aggressive or docile. Avoid abnormally-acting wild animals, pets and farm animals and report them to the Police Department. If you must move a dead animal, wear heavy gloves and/or use sticks or tools to avoid direct contact.
- (c) **TEACH YOUR CHILDREN TO AVOID WILDLIFE, STRAYS AND ALL OTHER ANIMALS THEY DO NOT KNOW WELL.** Instruct your children to tell you immediately if they see any animals that are acting unusual or out of character.
- (d) **AVOID ACTIVITIES WHICH ENCOURAGE WILD ANIMALS TO APPROACH YOUR HOME.** Do not leave food outside for your pets. If wild animals are living in your house, then talk to a pest control firm about animal-proofing your home. Crawl spaces under porches should be sealed and chimneys should be screened. Compost piles should be maintained so as not to attract any animals.
- (e) **DO NOT KEEP WILD ANIMALS SUCH AS SKUNKS, FERRETS OR RACCOONS AS PETS.** There are no rabies vaccines for wild species and keeping them as pets is illegal.[⁸]
- (f) **VACCINATE YOUR PETS AGAINST RABIES AND KEEP THEIR VACCINAL STATUS UP TO DATE.** State law now requires both dogs and cats to be vaccinated.[⁹] (See Appendix A)

- (g) COMPLY WITH CONCORD'S LEASH LAW FOR DOGS. Remember that unvaccinated pets may also become infected with rabies by eating the internal organs of infected carcasses.
- (h) STORE ALL GARBAGE IN TRASH CANS WITH TIGHT-FITTING LIDS. Trash cans should be made of metal or some other durable, animal-proof material. Concord's curbside pickup regulation forbids putting rubbish out for collection earlier than 5:00 a.m. on the day of collection.^[10]

4.2: If Bitten or Scratched by a Potentially Rabid Animal - If someone has been bitten or scratched by a wild animal, or by a pet or farm animal that exhibits unusual behavior, then the following steps should be taken:

- (a) Wash the wound for at least ten minutes with soap and water or a detergent solution. Encourage the wound to bleed, as this will help to flush the rabies virus from the wound.
- (b) After washing the wound, seek medical attention as soon as possible. Consult with a physician or health center in order to decide treatment procedure. Follow their instructions to the letter.
- (c) Call the Police Department at 369-7400 and provide the dispatcher with a description of the animal, its last known location and a description of any unusual behavior that it was exhibiting.

4.3: If a Potentially Rabid Animal is Handled - If someone has handled a wild animal, a pet or farm animal that exhibits unusual behavior, or the carcass of any animal, then the following steps should be taken:

- (a) Use soap and water or a detergent solution to wash away any saliva, blood or body fluids that got onto the skin. Carefully clean any exposed cuts or mucous membranes.
- (b) If there is any chance that saliva, blood or body fluid from the potentially rabid animal got onto an exposed cut or mucous membrane, then seek medical attention as soon as possible. Consult a physician or health center in order to decide treatment procedure. Follow their instructions to the letter.
- (c) Call the Police Department at 369-7400 and provide the dispatcher with a description of the animal, its last known location and a description of any unusual behavior that it was exhibiting.

4.4: If a Potentially Rabid Animal is Seen But Not Touched - If a person observes what might be a potentially rabid animal, then that person should contact the Police Department and give a description of the animal, its last known location, and a description of any unusual behavior exhibited by the animal.

4.5: If a Pet or Farm Animal is Exposed - If a domestic animal was exposed to a rabid or potentially rabid animal, then the following steps should be taken:

- (a) Assume the domestic animal was exposed to rabies if any of the following apply;

- (1) It had direct contact with, ate the viscera of, or has a visible bite from a confirmed rabid animal.
 - (2) It had direct contact with, ate the viscera of, or has a visible bite from a potentially rabid animal.
 - (3) It has a bite or scratch suspected to be from a potentially rabid animal.
- (b) If the domestic animal is bleeding or has any body fluid from a potentially rabid animal on its fur, put on heavy-duty rubber gloves before handling the animal. While wearing the gloves, use soap and water or a detergent solution to wash away any saliva, blood or body fluids that is on the domestic animal. Carefully clean any exposed cuts or mucous membranes for at least ten minutes. Encourage any wound to bleed, as this will help to flush the rabies virus from the wound. Consult with a veterinarian or animal center in order to decide treatment procedure for the animal.
- (c) Use detergent or soap and water solution to wash away any saliva, blood or body fluids that got onto your own skin. If you have an exposed cut or mucus membrane that was exposed to saliva, blood or body fluid from the animal, then clean it carefully and seek medical attention as soon as possible. Consult with a physician or health center in order to decide treatment procedure. Follow their instructions to the letter.
- (d) Call the Police Department at 369-7400 and provide the dispatcher with the following information;
- (1) A description of the exposed domestic animal, its last known location and the owner's name (if known).
 - (2) A description of the potentially rabid animal and its last location, if known.

4.6: If a Dead Animal is Found - After a rabid animal dies, its body fluid will remain infectious until the rabies virus breaks down in the carcass. If the temperature of a carcass is very high (i.e., under direct sunlight in the middle of summer) the virus can break down in a matter of hours. If the temperature of a carcass is very low (i.e., under shade in the dead of winter) the virus might not break down for many days. Therefore, when moving a carcass, it is advisable to wear heavy gloves and/or use sticks or tools to avoid direct contact.

Depending on where and when an animal carcass is found, one of the following departments should be contacted for removal:

- (a) During regular business hours - (Monday through Friday, from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm):
- (1) If the carcass is on private property, or on a private way which abuts private property, then contact the Board of Health office at 371-6275.
 - (2) If the carcass is on town property or on a public street, then contact the Department of Public Works 371-6280.

(b) After regular business hours - (after 4:30 pm, or on weekends or holidays):

- (1) Contact the Inspector of Animals (Dr. Edgar W. Tucker) at 369-2568.
- (2) If the Inspector of Animals is unavailable, then contact Locke's Pest Control and Exterminating at 371-2040 or 369-3802.

SECTION 5: GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYEES - WILD ANIMALS

5.1: Animals to Investigate - Although it is possible to observe an animal's behavior and make a guess as to whether or not it is potentially rabid, the method is not foolproof. Therefore, it is best to err on the side of caution and assume that all abnormally-acting wild animals are potentially rabid.

5.2: Information Needed to Investigate - Any person having knowledge of the existence of a rabid or potentially rabid wild animal should contact the Police Department at 369-7400 and provide the dispatcher with:

- (a) A description of the animal.
- (b) The last known location of the animal.
- (c) A description of any unusual behavior exhibited by the animal.
- (d) The name of any person, or owner of any domestic animal, that might have been exposed to the animal.

5.3: Investigation Procedures - Upon receiving a report of a rabid or potentially rabid wild animal, the Police Department shall attempt to locate the animal at its last known location. Current policies of the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife now permit any municipal police officer to kill immediately any raccoon, skunk, fox or woodchuck that displays behavior which gives such officer reason to conclude that such animal is rabid.^[1] Therefore, if the suspect animal is found and its behavior suggests that it could be a potential risk to the health and safety of the public, the investigating officer may kill the animal by use of a department firearm in accordance with the following guidelines:

- (a) All residents, especially children, shall be moved out of the area's line-of-sight/line-of-fire before the animal is killed.
- (b) The animal shall be killed quickly and humanely. The animal shall not be shot in the head if it is to be tested for rabies.
- (c) Care shall be taken to protect the officer and other people in the area from ricochets and misfires, and all policies and procedures governing the use of firearms shall be followed. Birdshot may be used when that would be the safest means of killing the animal.
- (d) The carcass of the animal shall be removed from the property by the investigating officer after being double-bagged in plastic bags. If a large animal is killed and the

carcass is too heavy for the officer to lift, or if another unusual circumstance occurs, then the officer may call the DPW for assistance.

- (e) Before leaving, the investigating officer shall give the property owner one of the rabies information flyers provided by the Board of Health (see Appendix B).
- (f) If the officer observes any conditions that might encourage more animals to come to that property in the future (i.e., overflowing garbage cans, food scattered on the ground) then the Board of Health shall be notified.

5.4: When Saving the Head is Most Important - The only way to test an animal for rabies is to examine brain tissue. Therefore, if an animal must be tested, care must be taken to avoid damaging the animal's head. There are four specific instances when it is critical to obtain the intact head of the animal:

- (a) When the animal has bitten or scratched a person.
- (b) When the animal, or its carcass, has been handled by a person.
- (c) When the animal has bitten, scratched or come into direct contact with a pet or other domestic animal.
- (d) When viscera from the animal's carcass has been eaten by a pet.

The results of the rabies test are used to determine whether the exposed person should be treated for rabies, or whether the domestic animal should be quarantined.

5.5: When Saving the Head is Less Important - It is neither critical, nor required, to obtain the intact head of dead animals that have not been eaten by pets (e.i. road kills) or animals that are "acting strangely", but have had no known contact with humans or pets. However, in order to track the spread of the disease through Massachusetts, the state has asked each city and town to submit for testing the heads of raccoons that are "acting strangely" until each community has two (2) confirmed cases of rabies.^[12]

Therefore, if a wild animal which has not contacted humans or pets is going to be shot because it is "acting strangely", then its head should be saved if the animal can be killed humanely without placing people or property at risk. This means that in a crowded, high-density neighborhood, the officer should shoot the animal in the head. In a rural, low-density neighborhood, the officer should shoot the animal in the body and save the head.

5.6: Disposal of Carcasses to be Tested - The carcass of any animal which must be tested for rabies shall be double-bagged in plastic bags and transported to the Concord Animal Hospital at 245 Baker Avenue within 2 hours. Officers should wear rubber gloves when handling a carcass and shall take care not to contaminate themselves or the cruiser with any body fluids. If necessary, the Department of Public Works may be contacted and a pick up truck or similar vehicle will be sent to transport the carcass. The Concord Animal Hospital will decapitate the head and prepare it for shipment to the State Virology Lab. If the Animal Hospital is closed, then the following steps shall be taken:

- (a) In the Event of Human Exposure - If the suspect animal either bit, scratched or had contact with a human being, then call one of the following veterinarians at home:

- (1) Robert D. Tucker - 369-1648
- (2) James L. Fisher - 264-4372
- (3) Brad Hardie - 486-0139
- (4) Edgar W. Tucker (retired) - 369-2568

- (b) In the Event of Domestic Animal Exposure - If the suspect animal either bit, scratched or had contact with a pet or farm animal, then place the carcass in the closed container reserved for this purpose at the Department of Public Works garage at 133 Keyes Road and inform the office of the Board of Health at 371-6275.

- (c) If No Exposure to Humans or Domestic Animals - If the suspect animal was "acting strangely", but had no contact with either people or pets, then place the carcass in the closed container reserved for this purpose at the Department of Public Works garage at 133 Keyes Road and inform the office of the Board of Health at 371-6275.

5.7: Disposal of Carcasses Not to be Tested - The carcass of any animal which is not going to be tested for rabies shall be buried in the Concord Sanitary Landfill. If the landfill is closed, then the carcass may be stored in the closed container reserved for this purpose at the Department of Public Works garage at 133 Keyes Road.

5.8: Protection of Personnel - The Town of Concord will provide:

- (a) Plastic bags and heavy-duty rubber gloves in the trunks of all police cruisers and the cabs of all DPW trucks which would be used to remove dead animals.
- (b) Heavy gloves with long sleeve protection and snares for the Animal Control Officers.

The group health insurance plan available to each employee will cover the cost of the pre-exposure rabies vaccine if it is prescribed by the employee's primary physician. The pre-exposure vaccine consists of a series of three injections over 21 days, with booster injections every two years thereafter. The vaccine helps to protect an individual who is exposed to the disease and reduces the emergency nature of the medical response to exposure. However, personnel who have been vaccinated against rabies and who are subsequently exposed to the virus still need medical attention. Individuals who are vaccinated will generally receive a series of two or more vaccinations if exposed to rabies; individuals who are not vaccinated receive a series of six injections.

SECTION 6: GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYEES - DOMESTIC ANIMALS

6.1: Animals to Investigate - A domestic animal shall be assumed to be exposed if any of the following apply;

- (a) It had direct contact with, ate the viscera of, or has a visible bite from a confirmed rabid animal.

(b) It had direct contact with, ate the viscera of, or has a visible bite from a potentially rabid animal.

(c) It has a bite or scratch suspected to be from a potentially rabid animal.

6.2: Information Needed to Investigate - Any person having knowledge of the existence of a domestic animal that was exposed to a rabid or potentially rabid wild animal should contact Concord Police Department and provide the dispatcher with the following information:

(a) A description of the animal.

(b) The last known location of the animal.

(c) The owner's name, if known.

(d) A description of any unusual behavior exhibited by the animal.

Although the Inspector of Animals is authorized under M.G.L. Ch. 129 ss. 19-21 to investigate any domestic animal, dogs may be referred initially to the Animal Control Officer in accordance with M.G.L. Ch. 140, s. 151.

6.3: Investigation Procedures - Upon receiving a report of an exposed domestic animal, the Inspector of Animals shall conduct an investigation to determine the following:

(a) Whether the exposed animal has been vaccinated; and if so, the type and date of vaccination.

(b) Any unusual behavior of the exposed animal.

(c) A list of other domestic animals possibly exposed.

If the investigation confirms that the domestic animal was exposed to a rabid or potentially rabid animal, then the Inspector of Animals shall immediately cause it to be quarantined or isolated in accordance with state law.^[13] (see Appendix C)

6.4: Responsibilities of Owner - State law requires the owner to pay for the quarantine, collection or isolation of an animal, but offers some compensation for the quarantine of animals raised for food.^[14] If the owner of an animal fails to comply with a valid order to quarantine or isolate that animal, then the owner can "be punished by a fine of not more than five hundred dollars or by imprisonment for not more than one year, or both".^[15]

APPENDIX A

AMENDMENTS TO M.G.L. CH. 140, S. 145B

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health

AN ACT RELATIVE TO THE VACCINATION OF DOGS AND CATS AGAINST RABIES.

Chapter 140, Section 145B. Whoever is the owner or keeper of a dog or cat in the commonwealth six months of age or older shall cause such dog or cat to be vaccinated against rabies by a licensed veterinarian using a licensed vaccine according to the manufacturer's directions, and shall cause such dog or cat to be revaccinated at intervals recommended by the manufacturer. Unvaccinated dogs and cats acquired or moved into the commonwealth shall be vaccinated within ninety days after the acquisition or arrival into the commonwealth or upon reaching the age of six months, whichever last occurs. It shall be the duty of each veterinarian, at the time of vaccinating any dog or cat, to complete a certificate of rabies vaccination which shall include, but not be limited to the following information: the owner's name and address; a description of the animal, including breed, sex, age, name and distinctive markings; the date of vaccination; the rabies vaccination tag number; the type of rabies vaccine used; the route of vaccination; the expiration date of the vaccine; and the vaccine lot number.

The veterinarian shall issue a tag with each certificate of vaccination. The tag shall be secured by the owner or keeper of such dog or cat to a collar or harness made of suitable material to be worn by the dog or cat; provided, however, that the owner of a cat may choose not to affix a tag to his cat, but shall have the tag available for inspection by authorized persons. In the event that a tag is lost, the owner or keeper of the animal shall, upon presentation of the original vaccination certificate, be issued a new tag.

In order for a dog or cat to be accepted at an animal hospital, veterinarian's office or boarding facility an owner or keeper of such animal shall show proof of current vaccination against rabies; provided however, that if a dog or cat has not been so vaccinated or such owner or keeper fails to show such proof the animal shall be vaccinated against rabies prior to being discharged if the animal's medical condition permits.

The provisions of this section shall not apply to dogs or cats housed in a research institution.

Whoever violates the provisions of this section shall be punished by a fine of not more than fifty dollars.

Note: Effective February 24, 1993

APPENDIX B

RABIES INFORMATION FLYERS

If someone you know has been bitten by an animal



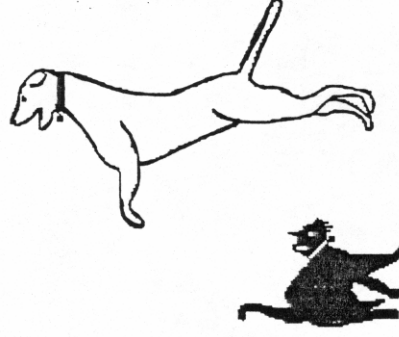
Anyone who is bitten by a wild animal or a domestic animal they are not familiar with should immediately take precautions to prevent rabies.

- + Immediately wash the wound in warm soapy water, gently scrubbing the injured area for at least 10 minutes.
- + Get a description of the animal that bit the person. People should learn to identify the animals common in their area, such as raccoons, skunks, foxes, bats, opossum, and others.
- + After the wound has been washed thoroughly, the person should immediately call their family doctor or a hospital emergency room. The bite should be reported to the local animal control official and board of health.
- + If the person was bitten by a wild animal that is still in the area, you should call the local animal control officer for assistance. If the animal was someone's pet, you should try to find out if the animal was vaccinated and who owned it.

For more information contact:

- ☎ Your local board of health
Telephone number is listed in phone book
- ☎ Massachusetts Department of Public Health
Division of Epidemiology
(617) 522-3700 Ext. 420
- ☎ Massachusetts Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
(617) 522-7400
- ☎ Massachusetts Veterinary Medical Association
Executive Office
(508) 839-6155

The risk of RABIES is expected to RISE in Massachusetts



Do you know how to protect your family and furry friends?

Facts about rabies

Rabies is a disease of the nervous system caused by a virus usually transmitted by a bite, scratch or contact with an infected animal's saliva. When an animal or person is infected by the virus, the disease spreads through the nervous system to the brain. It will paralyze and kill the infected person or animal if not promptly treated.



Animals in the wild that most commonly carry the disease are raccoons, skunks, foxes and bats. These animals can transmit it to pets, including cats and dogs, and to humans. Other animals, such as birds, snakes, turtles and fish do not carry rabies.

Strict controls, including vaccination of cats and dogs and the impounding of strays, has resulted in a drastic decrease of rabies cases. In the early 1950s, there was an average of 5,000 cases of rabies in dogs and nearly 20 cases in humans each year in the United States. In the 1980s, an average of 200 rabid dogs and cats and 1 to 3 cases in humans with rabies were reported annually.

Massachusetts and other New England states have seen similar decreases. However, the risk of rabies is now rising because an outbreak carried by raccoons has been progressing north toward Massachusetts. This makes it especially important for people to vaccinate their pets and educate their family about avoiding contact with wild animals.

Things you can do to help control rabies

The best way to reduce your risk of rabies is to protect your pets and to decrease your contact with wild animals. These goals can be met by following a few simple guidelines:



Have your dogs and cats vaccinated. Obey leash laws and report strays to the local dog officer.



Don't feed your pets outdoors -- it could attract wild animals and strays. Never feed wild animals, especially near your home.



Keep your distance from wild animals, even if they seem tame. Never try to keep wild animals as pets -- it's against the law! Don't touch dead animals.

Reduce your home's appeal



Install a chimney cap to prevent raccoons and other animals from living inside your home.



Seal areas around your house that animals may use as a den. This includes under porches, crawl spaces beneath your house, your attic and openings in sheds and other out buildings. **Make sure animals have left before you seal up the space!**



Secure your garbage cans so they don't attract raccoons, skunks and strays looking for food.

What to do if your pet has been bitten



Try to determine what type of animal bit your pet. Put on gloves and wash your animal's wounds with warm soapy water for at least 10 minutes. Contact your veterinarian immediately.



If the animal that bit your pet was a possible rabies carrier and your pet is up-to-date on its rabies vaccination, your pet will need to be confined for observation. If it exhibits signs of rabies, it will be put to sleep so its brain can be tested in a laboratory.



Remember: the best way to prevent rabies is to have your pets vaccinated!

What if your pet has bitten someone?



Notify your local animal control official and your veterinarian.



Don't let it stray or give it away -- it should be confined 10 days for observation to make sure it is not ill with rabies.

WILDLIFE RABIES IN MASSACHUSETTS

Rabies is a virus that affects the nervous system of mammals. If left untreated it is always fatal.

Rabies has occurred in Massachusetts periodically since the early 1800's. It has, from time to time shown up in dogs, cats, foxes and bats. Rabies currently occurs occasionally in bats, approximately 3-10% of bats annually submitted test positive for rabies. Since 1977 raccoon rabies has been spreading through the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast states. Rabies can also be carried by foxes, skunks, cats, dogs, and domestic livestock.

Rabies is spread through a bite or a scratch from an infected animal. You can protect yourself and your family by observing some precautions, and following a few simple rules.

PET OWNERS:

- Pets are the most likely bridge between wildlife rabies and people. Vaccinate cats and dogs for rabies.
- Dogs and cats may come in contact with raccoons and may be bitten or scratched. Keep pets restrained at all times.
- Feed pets indoors, do not leave pet food outside.



CAMPERS, HIKERS, PICNICKERS:

- Do not feed wild animals.
- Do not approach or handle wild animals.
- Secure your food and garbage so that wild animals will not have access to them.

HOUSEHOLDERS:

- Do not approach or handle wild animals.
- Do not feed wild animals.
- Secure garbage and trash in trash containers with tight fitting lids.
- Place trash out for pickup on the same day it will be picked up by rubbish collectors.
- Cap chimneys with screens.
- Seal openings in attics, basements, porches, and sheds or barns.



IF YOU HAVE CONTACT WITH AN ANIMAL SUSPECTED OF BEING RABID:

- ☞ Wash the wound thoroughly with soap and water.
- ❖ Seek medical attention immediately.
- ☑ If possible, capture, kill or confine the animal without damaging the head.
- ☎ Contact your local health department.

APPENDIX C

AMENDMENTS TO 330 CMR 4.03

REFERENCES

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- ¹ American Public Health Association, Control of Communicable Diseases in Man, 14th ed. (Washington, D.C.: American Public Health Assoc., 1985), pp. 310-311.
- ² Centers for Disease Control, "Rabies Prevention - United States, 1991," Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Reports Recommendations and Reports, 40, No. RR-3 (1991), p. 6.
- ³ Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Public Health Fact Sheet - Rabies (Boston: Mass. Dept. of Public Health, 1991).
- ⁴ American Public Health Association, p. 311.
- ⁵ Personal communication with Edgar W. Tucker, Concord Inspector of Animals, November 1992.
- ⁶ Winthrop E. Brielman, Susan M. Lett and Michael McGuill, "Rabies and Animal Control," seminar on Local Issues in Communicable Disease Control presented by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Bureau of Communicable Disease Control and the Massachusetts Health Officers Association, Jamaica Plain, MA, 30 Nov 1992.
- ⁷ M.G.L. Ch. 131, s. 19A and 321 CMR 2.14 (23).
- ⁸ M.G.L. Ch. 131, s. 23 and 321 CMR 2.12 (9).
- ⁹ M.G.L. Ch. 140, a. 145B, as amended in November of 1992.
- ¹⁰ Concord Board of Health, Regulation for the Removal, Transportation, and Disposal of Refuse in the Town of Concord, Massachusetts, 1992, Section 9.4.
- ¹¹ Mass. Dept. of Public Health, Mass. Dept. of Food and Agriculture, and Mass. Dept. of Fisheries, Wildlife and Environmental Law Enforcement, Commonwealth of Massachusetts Rabies Control Plan for Cities and Towns, 1992, p 15.
- ¹² Brielman, Lett and McGuill, 1992.
- ¹³ 330 CMR 4.03, as amended in October of 1992, and M.G.L. Ch. 129, ss. 21-22.
- ¹⁴ M.G.L. Ch. 129, s. 29.
- ¹⁵ M.G.L. Ch. 129, s. 30.